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Living arrangements of Aboriginal children aged 14 and under

by Annie Turner

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^{p} preliminary
^{r} revised
x suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the *Statistics Act*
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Living arrangements of Aboriginal children aged 14 and under

by Annie Turner

Overview of the study

This study uses data from the National Household Survey (NHS) to examine the living arrangements of Aboriginal children aged 14 and under, and includes results about Aboriginal children who lived with a lone parent, with their grandparents, or in a stepfamily. The study also provides key statistics about Aboriginal foster children.

- In 2011, there were 392,100 Aboriginal children aged 14 and under in Canada, representing 28% of the total Aboriginal population. By comparison, non-Aboriginal children in the same age group represented 17% of the total non-Aboriginal population.
- Aboriginal children aged 14 and under were less likely than non-Aboriginal children to live with married parents, twice as likely to live with a lone parent and twice as likely to live with their grandparents. They were also more likely to live in a stepfamily.
- In 2011, there were more than 14,000 Aboriginal children aged 14 and under in foster care. Aboriginal children accounted for 7% of all children in Canada but for almost one-half (48%) of all foster children.
- Three-quarters (76%) of Aboriginal foster children lived in the four Western provinces, compared with 62% of Aboriginal children who were not in foster care. In Manitoba and Saskatchewan, 85% or more of foster children were Aboriginal children.
- In 2011, 44% of Aboriginal foster children lived with at least one Aboriginal foster parent. This percentage varied across provinces, from 29% in Alberta to 70% in New Brunswick and in Newfoundland and Labrador. In the territories, this percentage was 13% in Yukon, 45% in the Northwest Territories and 88% in Nunavut.

Introduction

Over the past century, Canadian families have been increasingly characterized by more diverse living arrangements. Up until the 1960s, families mainly included a married couple and their biological children. Over the past 50 years, however, the proportion of married-couple families has been declining, while the proportion of common-law couples, lone-parent families and stepfamilies has been on the rise.[1] Although children living with a married couple remains the predominant family structure, the number of children living with parents in a common-law relationship has been increasing over the past few decades.[2] The 2011 National Household Survey (NHS) showed that Aboriginal children (First Nations, Métis and Inuit) in Canada are also growing up in diverse living arrangements. Similar to non-Aboriginal children, the majority of Aboriginal children lived with both of their parents or with a lone parent. However, Aboriginal children were more likely than non-Aboriginal children to be stepchildren, grandchildren living with grandparents (with and without their parents present), foster children or children living with other relatives.

Family structure and the circumstances in which children grow up can have a significant influence on children's development and well-being. There is, however, very limited research on the specific living arrangements of Aboriginal children.

This study uses data from the 2011 NHS (see *Data sources, methods and definitions*) to provide an in-depth portrait of the living arrangements of Aboriginal children aged 14 and under in Canada.[3] More specifically, the living arrangements of Aboriginal children in each of the Aboriginal groups (First Nations, Métis and Inuit) will be presented.[4] In some cases, differences between age groups (0 to 4, 5 to 9 and 10 to 14 years) and differences between geographic regions will also be discussed. Furthermore, some results for First Nations children with registered Indian status living on and off reserve and for Inuit children living inside and outside Inuit Nunangat will be shown.[5] This study will also focus on the Aboriginal identity of the adult(s) living with Aboriginal children, which is especially important for Aboriginal foster children.

Past research on Aboriginal families has highlighted the importance of extended families in raising Aboriginal children.[6] For example, the 2006 Aboriginal Children's Survey (ACS) illustrated that there are many people involved in raising Aboriginal children, including extended family, community members and Elders.[7] The 2011 NHS provides a rich data set for analyzing the living arrangements of Aboriginal children. The NHS, however, only collects data about the relationship between people living in the same household—it therefore does not provide information about other family members and other people living outside the home who may play a role in raising children.

Overview of living arrangements of Aboriginal children aged 14 and under in Canada

The Aboriginal population in Canada is younger than the non-Aboriginal population. According to the 2011 NHS, there were 392,100 Aboriginal children aged 14 and under in Canada, representing 28% of the total Aboriginal population. In comparison, non-Aboriginal children in the same age group represented 17% of the total non-Aboriginal population. The Inuit population was youngest, with children aged 14 and under representing one-third (34%) of that population, compared with 30% for First Nations people and 23% for Métis. Among Aboriginal children aged 14 and under in Canada, two-thirds (66%) identified as First Nations, 27% as Métis and 5% as Inuit.[8]

One-half of Aboriginal children (50%) aged 14 and under lived in a family[9] with both parents (biological or adoptive), compared with three-quarters (76%) of their non-Aboriginal counterparts (Table 1). The vast majority (97%) of Aboriginal children living with both parents lived with at least one parent who had an Aboriginal identity. However, Inuit and First Nations children were the most likely to live with two parents who both had the same Aboriginal identity as them.[10]

The proportion of Aboriginal children living with a lone parent (34%) was higher than for non-Aboriginal children (17%). Aboriginal children

Table 1
Children aged 14 and under in private households by living arrangement and by Aboriginal identity, 2011

	Aboriginal identity									
	Total Aboriginal children		First Nations children		Inuit children		Métis children		Total non-Aboriginal children	
	thousand	percent	thousand	percent	thousand	percent	thousand	percent	thousand	percent
Living arrangements										
Total population aged 14 and under in private households	392.1	100.0	258.8	100.0	20.2	100.0	104.4	100.0	5,200.7	100.0
Children of both parents[1]	194.6	49.6	116.4	45.0	12.4	61.6	60.6	58.0	3,953.9	76.0
Stepchildren	33.4	8.5	22.4	8.7	1.3	6.3	8.9	8.6	299.4	5.8
Children of lone parents	134.9	34.4	96.0	37.1	5.2	25.8	31.1	29.8	902.4	17.4
Grandchildren in skip-generation family	10.5	2.7	8.5	3.3	0.5	2.3	1.5	1.4	18.7	0.4
Foster children	14.2	3.6	11.7	4.5	0.6	2.8	1.8	1.7	15.3	0.3
Children living with other relatives[2,3]	4.5	1.2	3.7	1.4	0.2	1.1	0.5	0.5	11.1	0.2

1. Includes children in a two-parent family where there may also be step siblings or half-siblings present. Also includes children in a two-parent family for whom it cannot be determined if they are stepchildren.
2. Non-relatives may be present.
3. This category excludes foster children.
Source: Statistics Canada, National Household Survey, 2011.

were also more likely than their non-Aboriginal counterparts to be stepchildren (9% versus 6%), foster children (3.6% versus 0.3%), and to live with grandparents in a skip-generation household (2.7% versus 0.4%). Finally, a little over 1% of Aboriginal children aged 14 and under lived with other relatives in arrangements that did not include at least one parent or grandparent. These relatives could be extended family such as aunts, uncles or cousins. This was the case for 0.2% of non-Aboriginal children of the same age group.

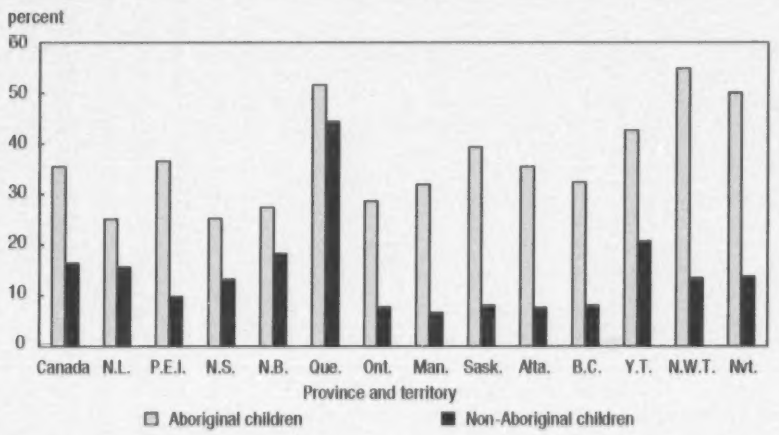
Aboriginal children more likely than non-Aboriginal children to live with parents who are in a common-law relationship

There is diversity between the types of unions that exist among two-parent families. Among Aboriginal children living with both of their biological or adoptive parents, almost two-thirds (65%) lived with married parents. Just over one-third (35%) of Aboriginal children living with two parents lived with common-law parents, which was more than double the proportion among non-Aboriginal children (16%). Among the Aboriginal groups, common-law unions were most common among the parents of Inuit (47%) and First Nations children (41%). For Métis children, 23% were living with parents in a common-law union.

Irrespective of the province or territory where they live, Aboriginal children were more likely than non-Aboriginal children to live with parents in a common-law union (Chart 1). Among those living in two-parent families, Aboriginal children in Quebec (52%), Saskatchewan (39%) and the territories (55% in the Northwest Territories, 50% in Nunavut and 43% in Yukon) were the most likely to live with parents in a common-law union. The difference between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children living with common-law parents was smaller between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children in Quebec, where 44% of non-Aboriginal children in two-parent families were living with common-law parents.

The proportion of children living with parents in a common-law union was higher among First Nations children with registered Indian status living on reserve (50%) than those living off reserve (40%). The proportion of Inuit children living with common-law parents was 51% within Inuit Nunangat. Outside Inuit Nunangat, a lower proportion of Inuit children lived with common-law parents (28%).

Chart 1
Proportion of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children with common-law parents among those living in two parent families, province and territory, 2011



Source: Statistics Canada, National Household Survey, 2011.

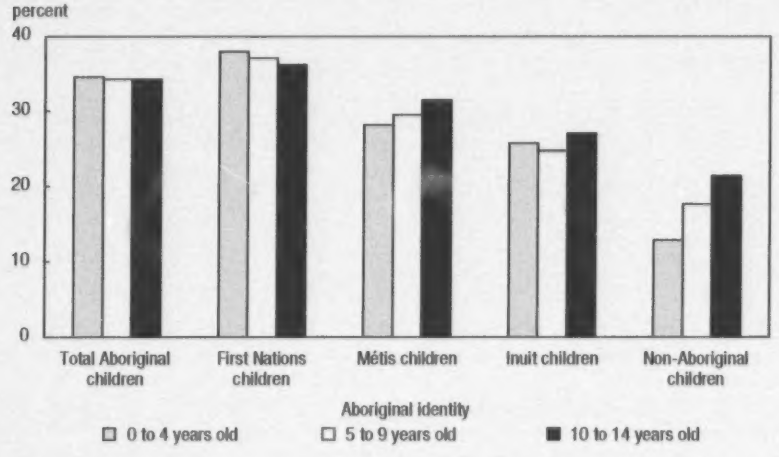
Aboriginal children more likely than non-Aboriginal children to live with a lone parent

Lone-parent families have been on the rise in Canada since the 1960s.[11] As indicated above, Aboriginal children are more likely than non-Aboriginal children to live with a lone parent. In 2011, 34% of Aboriginal children aged 14 and under were living with a lone parent compared with 17% of non-Aboriginal children.[12] The proportion was 37% for First Nations children, 30% for Métis children and 26% for Inuit children (Table 1). For First Nations children with registered Indian status, the proportion was 41% for those living off reserve and 36% for those living on reserve.[13]

Among the age groups of children living with a lone parent, there were differences between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children. More than one-third (35%) of Aboriginal children aged 0 to 4 lived in a lone-parent family (Chart 2), and this proportion was similar across age groups (34% for 5-to-9 year-olds and for 10-to-14 year-olds). Among non-Aboriginal children, the proportions were 13% for 0-to-4 year-olds, 18% for 5-to-9 year-olds and 21% for 10-to-14 year-olds.

Furthermore, just over one-third (36%) of Aboriginal children under the age of 1 were living in a lone-parent family—the proportion was 10% for non-Aboriginal children. This shows that more Aboriginal children are living in a lone-parent family at a younger age (0-to-4 years-olds), whereas non-Aboriginal children are more likely to live in a lone-parent family when they are in the older age group (10-to-14 years-old). For both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children under the age of 1, the majority of those who were living with a lone parent lived with a female parent (88% in both cases).

Chart 2
Proportion of Aboriginal children living with lone-parents, by age group and Aboriginal identity, 2011



Source: Statistics Canada, National Household Survey, 2011.

Table 2
Proportion of children living with grandparents in skip-generation and multi-generation households, by Aboriginal identity, 2011

	Aboriginal identity				
	Total Aboriginal children	First Nations children	Métis children	Inuit children	Non-Aboriginal children
	percent				
Total - Child in Census families	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**
Child living with grandparents	13.3	15.3	8.4	15.1	7.9
Child in skip-generation household	2.7	3.3	1.4	2.3	0.4
Child in multigeneration household	10.6	12.0	7.0	12.8	7.6
Child with couple parents and grandparent(s)	3.4	3.7	2.5	4.9	5.3
Child with lone parent and grandparent(s)	7.2	8.3	4.6	7.9	2.2

Source: Statistics Canada, National Household Survey, 2011.

Aboriginal children are twice as likely as non-Aboriginal children to live with a grandparent

Along with other changes in the structure of Canadian families over the past few decades, there has also been a rise in the number of Canadian children who are living with their grandparents[14]—in either a "skip-generation" household (children living with grandparent(s) only) or in a "multigenerational" household (children living with at least one parent and at least one grandparent). Irrespective of the Aboriginal group (First Nations, Métis or Inuit), Elders and grandparents have always been held in high regard for their wisdom and as advisors and keepers of cultural knowledge.[15] Grandparents often play an important role in raising children in First Nations, Métis and Inuit families.

In 2011, 2.7% of Aboriginal children aged 14 and under were living with at least one grandparent in a skip-generation household (without their parents present), compared with 0.4% of non-Aboriginal children (Table 2). This was the case for 3.3% of First Nations children, 2.3% of Inuit children and 1.4% of Métis children.

At the same time, roughly 11% of Aboriginal children were living in a multigenerational household with at least one of their parents present.[16] This was the case for 8% of non-Aboriginal children.[17] The proportions were 13% for Inuit children, 12% for First Nations children and 7% for Métis children.

Among First Nations children with registered Indian status living on reserve, 19% were living in a multigenerational household. The proportion was 7% for First Nations children with registered Indian status living off reserve, and 8% for First Nations children without registered Indian status living off reserve. Among Inuit children, 14% of those living in Inuit Nunangat were living in a multigenerational household, compared with 9% of those living outside Inuit Nunangat.

More than two-thirds (68%) of Aboriginal children living in a multigenerational household—with grandparent(s) and at least one parent present—lived with a lone parent and grandparents, compared with 30% of non-Aboriginal children who were in the same situation.[18] Multigenerational families among the Aboriginal population are thus more likely to be formed with single parents and grandparents, while for the non-Aboriginal population, it is more common to see two parent-grandparent households.

Aboriginal stepchildren more likely to live in a complex stepfamily

For the first time in 2011, the NHS collected data on stepfamilies. Stepfamilies can be classified as either simple or complex. In a simple stepfamily, all children are biological or adopted children of one and only one married spouse or common-law partner. A complex stepfamily consists of any of one the following:

- families in which there is at least one child of both parents and at least one child of one parent
- families in which there is at least one child of each parent and no children of both parents
- families in which there is at least one child of both parents and at least one child of each parent.

About 9% (33,400) of all Aboriginal children aged 14 and under in 2011 were stepchildren, while the share for non-Aboriginal children was lower at 6%. More than one-half (55%) of Aboriginal stepchildren lived in a complex stepfamily, compared with 47% of non-Aboriginal stepchildren (Table 3). More precisely, 39% of Aboriginal stepchildren were living in a family with a child or children of each parent and no children of both parents—also the most common scenario among non-Aboriginal stepchildren. A little over 10% of Aboriginal stepchildren were living in a family with a child or children of both parents and a child or children of one parent only. Finally, 6% of Aboriginal stepchildren were living in a family with a child or children of both parents and a child or children of each parent.

Table 3
Percentage distribution of stepchildren across stepfamily status, by Aboriginal identity, 2011

	Aboriginal identity				
	Total Aboriginal children	First Nations children	Métis children	Inuit children[1]	Non-Aboriginal children
	percent				
Total stepchildren	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**
Children living in simple stepfamilies	44.7	43.6	47.8	42.7	53.2
Children living in complex stepfamilies	55.3	56.5	52.2	57.3	46.8
Children living in families with child(ren) of both parents and child(ren) of one parent only	10.3	9.1	12.8	11.8	14.0
Children living in families with child(ren) of each parent and no children of both parents	38.7	40.3	34.6	40.8	29.7
Children living in families with child(ren) of both parents and child(ren) of each parent	6.3	7.0	4.7	5.5	3.2

1. Percentages may not add to total due to rounding.
Source: Statistics Canada, National Household Survey, 2011.

Aboriginal children live in larger families than non-Aboriginal children

Fertility among the Aboriginal population is higher than among the non-Aboriginal population,[19] translating into larger families. In 2011, about 17% of Aboriginal children aged 14 and under lived in a family with four or more children in the same age group compared with 7% of non-Aboriginal children (Table 4). This varied by Aboriginal group with 20% of both First Nations

and Inuit children, and 8% of Métis children living in a family with four or more children.

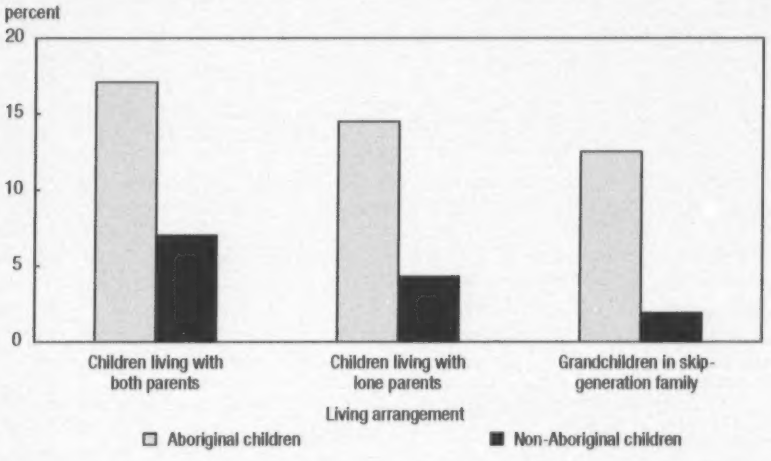
In all types of families, Aboriginal children were more likely than non-Aboriginal children to live in a larger family. For example, 15% of Aboriginal children who lived in a lone-parent family lived in a family with four or more children, compared with 4% of non-Aboriginal children in the same living arrangement (Chart 3). There were also differences between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children living in a skip-generation family—with grandparent(s) and no parents present—where 13% of Aboriginal children lived in a family with four or more children, compared with 2% of non-Aboriginal children.

Table 4
Number of children aged 14 and under in census family, by Aboriginal identity, 2011

	Aboriginal identity				
	Total Aboriginal children	First Nations children	Métis children	Inuit children	Non-Aboriginal children
	percent				
Total children in census families	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**
1 child	25.9	24.5	29.3	23.9	28.6
2 children	36.3	33.4	43.0	33.9	46.6
3 children	21.2	21.8	19.7	22.4	18.1
4 or more children	16.6	20.3	8.0	19.8	6.7

Source: Statistics Canada, National Household Survey, 2011.

Chart 3
Proportion of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children aged 14 and under in families with four or more children in the same age group, by selected living arrangements, 2011



Source: Statistics Canada, National Household Survey, 2011.

Almost one-half of all foster children aged 14 and under are Aboriginal

In Canada, there is no centralized child welfare system. There are over 300 provincial and territorial child welfare agencies that operate under the jurisdiction of the 13 provinces and territories. Furthermore, over 100 agencies deliver services specifically to First Nations, Métis and urban Aboriginal children.[20] The importance of placing Aboriginal children with families who identify culturally with the child has been identified as a consideration in placement decision making.[21] In addition to this, a key recommendation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada was that adequate resources be made available to Aboriginal communities and child-welfare organizations to keep Aboriginal families together when safe to do so, and to keep children in culturally appropriate environments.[22]

For the first time, in 2011, Statistics Canada collected information about whether or not a child in a household was a foster child. The data show that, in 2011, there were 14,200 Aboriginal children[23] aged 14 and under who were foster children[24] in Canada (for more information about older children in foster care, see *Aboriginal teenagers in foster care*). Aboriginal children were overrepresented among foster children—they accounted for 48% of all foster children in Canada even though they made up 7% of the overall population aged 14 and under. The majority of Aboriginal foster children were First Nations (82%), while about 13% were Métis and 4% were Inuit.[25]

There is variation between age groups among foster children. Aboriginal children accounted for

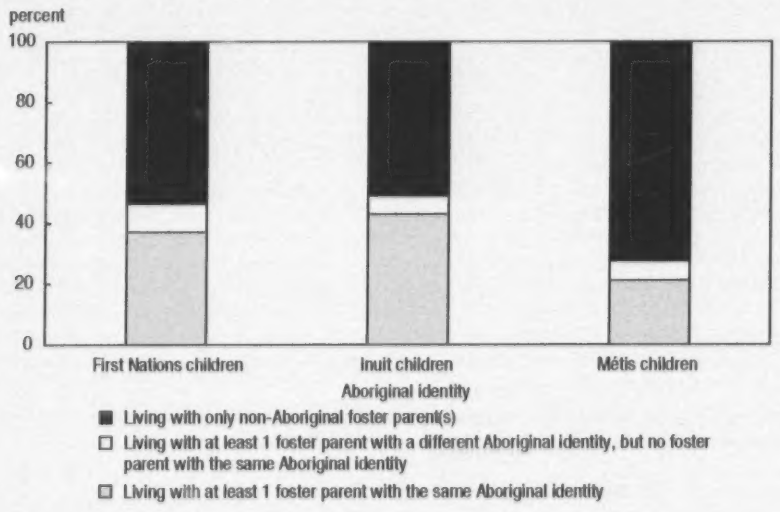
one-half (49%) of all foster children aged 0 to 4, more than one-half (56%) of all foster children aged 5 to 9, and 41% of all foster children aged 10 to 14—yet Aboriginal children represent about 7% of all children in each of those age groups in Canada.

Table 5
Proportion of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children among all children and among children in foster care, provinces and territories, 2011

	Total children		Total children in foster care	
	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal
	percent			
Canada	**7.0**	**93.0**	**48.1**	**51.9**
Newfoundland and Labrador	10.7	89.3	28.0	72.0
Prince Edward Island	2.7	97.3	0.0	100.0
Nova Scotia	5.9	94.1	23.9	76.1
New Brunswick	5.0	95.0	28.8	71.2
Quebec	2.7	97.3	15.4	84.6
Ontario	3.4	96.6	25.5	74.5
Manitoba	27.6	72.4	84.6	15.4
Saskatchewan	27.4	72.6	87.0	13.0
Alberta	9.8	90.2	73.4	26.6
British Columbia	9.0	91.0	56.0	44.0
Yukon	33.0	67.0	100.0	0.0
Northwest Territories	66.8	33.2	93.8	6.3
Nunavut	95.5	4.5	100.0	0.0

Source: Statistics Canada, National Household Survey, 2011.

Chart 4
Aboriginal identity of foster parents, by Aboriginal identity of foster children, 2011



Source: Statistics Canada, National Household Survey, 2011.

Three-quarters of Aboriginal foster children live in the western provinces

Three-quarters (76%) of Aboriginal foster children lived in the western provinces, compared with 62% of Aboriginal children who were not foster children. In 2011, 25% of Aboriginal foster children lived in Manitoba, 22% in Alberta, 17% in British Columbia, and 12% in Saskatchewan.

The proportion of foster children who were Aboriginal varied by province and territory (Table 5). In Saskatchewan, 87% of all foster children aged 14 and under were Aboriginal children. This was the case for 85% of foster children in Manitoba, 73% in Alberta and 56% in British Columbia. Nearly all children in foster care in Nunavut, Yukon Territory and in the Northwest Territories were Aboriginal children, according to NHS data. However, there is a higher proportion of Aboriginal children in those provinces (of all children aged 14 and under, the proportion of Aboriginal children was 96% in Nunavut, 67% in the Northwest Territories, and 33% in Yukon).

Less than one-half of Aboriginal children in foster care live with at least one adult with an Aboriginal identity

Among the 11,700 First Nations foster children,[26] 37% were living with at least one foster parent who also identified as First Nations, 9% were living with at least one foster parent who had a different Aboriginal identity[27], and 54% lived with non-Aboriginal foster parents (Chart 4).

Of the 600 Inuit foster children in Canada, 43% were living with at least one Inuit foster parent, 6% lived with at least one foster parent of another Aboriginal identity, and 51% were living with non-Aboriginal foster parents.

Of the 1,800 Métis foster children in Canada, a little over 20% were living with at least one Métis foster parent, while 6% lived with at least one foster parent of another Aboriginal identity and 72% lived with non-Aboriginal foster parents.

In 2011, there were 9,900 First Nations children with registered Indian status who were foster children; one-quarter of them lived on reserve. Of those who lived on reserve, almost all (99%) lived with at least one foster parent who was First Nations. Among First Nations foster children with registered Indian status living off reserve, 21% were living with at least one foster parent who also reported being First Nations.

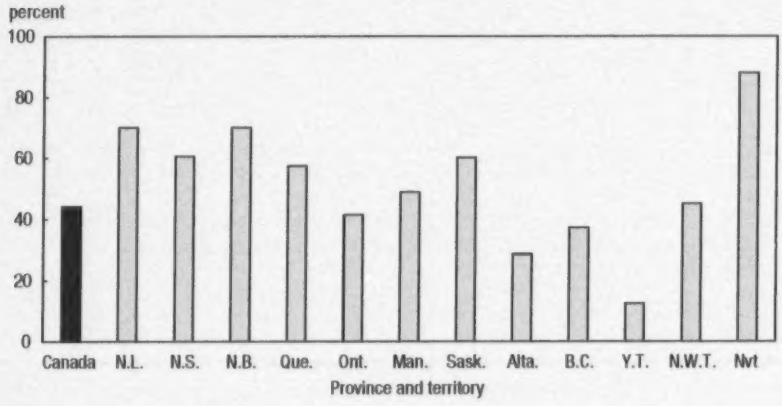
The overall proportion of Aboriginal children in foster care who lived with at least one Aboriginal foster parent, regardless of whether or not they had the same Aboriginal identity, was 44%. This percentage, however, varied by province and territory, from 88% in Nunavut to 13% in Yukon (Chart 5).

In all provinces located to the east of Ontario, the proportions of Aboriginal foster children living with at least one Aboriginal foster parent were above the national average, with percentages varying between 58% in Quebec to 70% in New Brunswick and Newfoundland and Labrador. In Ontario, 42% of Aboriginal foster children were living with at least one Aboriginal foster parent. This was the case for 49% of Aboriginal foster children in Manitoba, 60% in Saskatchewan, 29% in Alberta (the lowest proportion of all provinces), and 37% in British Columbia.

In the territories, the percentage of Aboriginal children with an Aboriginal foster parent also varied, as the percentages were 13% in Yukon, 45% in the Northwest Territories, and 88% in Nunavut.

Finally, Aboriginal foster children were also more likely to live in a household with three or more foster children—52% of Aboriginal foster children lived in a household with three or more foster children compared with 40% of non-Aboriginal foster children.

Chart 5
Proportion of Aboriginal foster children living with at least one Aboriginal foster parent, province and territory, 2011



Note: Prince Edward Island data was suppressed to meet confidentiality requirements.
Source: Statistics Canada, National Household Survey, 2011.

Conclusion

Similar to other children in Canada, Aboriginal children across the country have diverse and varied living arrangements. Aboriginal children, however, are more likely than non-Aboriginal children to live in a large family, with two parents who are in a common-law relationship, with a lone parent, or with grandparents. Note that the NHS results provide a snapshot of living arrangements at one point in time and therefore do not provide information about the stability of such arrangements over time. In order to obtain such details, additional research would be needed to study the stability of living arrangements within the Aboriginal population and their possible association with some of the health, education and social outcomes observed within this population.

For Aboriginal people, the conceptualization of family often involves definitions of family that extend beyond the household.[28] In fact, results from the Aboriginal Children's Survey (ACS) have shown that Aboriginal children have extended family, community members and Elders who spend time with them and who are involved in their lives. As the NHS cannot capture these complexities, the results of this study should be interpreted with an understanding of the importance of people living outside the home in raising Aboriginal children. Future studies that examine the role of the family on children's outcomes should consider aspects of family that may be particularly relevant to Aboriginal people, outside of household composition, including family ties, mobility and kinship.

This study also presented statistics showing the higher proportion of Aboriginal foster children in Canada—an issue that warrants further research and exploration. Furthermore, The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, recommended that annual reports on the number of Aboriginal children who are in foster care compared to the number of non-Aboriginal children are published.[29] Less than one-half of Aboriginal foster children are living with foster parents who identify with the same Aboriginal group as theirs. It has been suggested that Aboriginal foster children living with a family that shares similar cultural beliefs and practices can help their foster children adjust to living with a new family.[30] The proportion of Aboriginal foster children living with at least one Aboriginal foster parent, however, vary considerably across provinces and territories.

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Data sources, methods and definitions

Data sources

Data for this paper are from the 2011 National Household Survey (NHS). Data are analyzed for children aged 14 and under living in a private household, and for some analyses, for children aged 15 to 18.

Methods

The Aboriginal identity concept was used in all analyses. "Aboriginal identity" refers to whether the person reported being an Aboriginal person—First Nations (North American Indian), Métis or Inuk (Inuit)—and/or being a Registered or Treaty Indian (registered under the *Indian Act* of Canada) and/or being a member of a First Nation or Indian band. Although single and multiple responses to the Aboriginal identity question are possible, the data in this document for each of the three Aboriginal groups are based on the population reporting a single identity of First Nations, Métis or Inuit. Less than 1% of Aboriginal children were reported as having multiple identities. All analyses are descriptive.

To ensure the confidentiality of responses collected for the 2011 National Household Survey while maintaining the quality of the results, a random rounding process is used to alter the values reported in individual cells. As a result, when these data are summed or grouped, the total value may not match the sum of the individual values since the total and subtotals are independently rounded. Similarly, percentage distributions, which are calculated on rounded data, may not necessarily add up to 100%.

Definitions

Children: In the first part of this article on living arrangements, the children population refers to children aged 14 and under in census families. Children in census families refer to blood, step- or adopted sons and daughters (regardless of age) who are living in the same dwelling as their parent(s), as well as grandchildren in households where there are no parents present. See the *Families Reference Guide, 2011 Census*[31] for more information on the definition and concept of children.

Foster children: In the second part of the article, the concept of "foster children" is used. This population includes children in private households who have been reported as foster children on the NHS questionnaire. Foster children are considered as "other relatives" outside of a census family. Because the direct relationship between the adults in the household and the foster children is unknown, the adults chosen are the reference person and spouse of the reference person in the same economic family as the foster child(ren).

Multigenerational household: A household containing three or more generations of grandparents, parents and children. The middle generation may be comprised of two parents who are part of a couple, a lone parent, or a more complex situation such as both a couple and a lone parent.

Skip-generation household: A household containing one or more grandparents and grandchildren, and no parents.

Aboriginal teenagers in foster care

In Canada, legislative standards of child welfare vary across the country. The United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (UNCRC) defines a child as under 18 years of age, however the age that a person ceases to be a child for the purpose of receiving protective services in Canada varies by province and territory.[32] This means that, at or before the age of 18, children may lose access to their foster homes, financial support and social workers. While the focus of the current study is on children aged 14 and under, in terms of foster children, it is also important to look at teenagers aged 15 to 18.

In 2011, there were 113,350 Aboriginal teenagers aged 15 to 18, representing 7% of all Canadians in that age group. About 3,200 of those were in foster care, representing 30% of all teenagers in foster care in that age group. The majority (80%) lived in the western provinces, 26% in Manitoba, 22% in British Columbia, 16% in Alberta and 15% in Saskatchewan.

The majority of Aboriginal teenagers in foster care were First Nations (77%) or Métis (19%). Among First Nations teenagers in foster care, 85% were Registered Indians.

Among Aboriginal teenagers in foster care, 44% were living with a foster parent who was Aboriginal. This was the case for 79% of Inuit, 50% of First Nations and 18% of Métis teenagers in foster care.

Notes

1. See Bohnert et al. (2014).
2. See Milan and Bohnert (2012).
3. While the census definition of "child" refers strictly to sons and daughters living in a census family with married, common-law or lone parents, for simplicity, the population aged 14 and under is often referred to in this document as "children." See the *Families Reference Guide, 2011 Census* (Statistics Canada, 2012) for more information on the definition and concept of children.
4. Aboriginal identity refers to whether the person reported being an Aboriginal person—First Nations (North American Indian), Métis or Inuk (Inuit), and/or being a Registered or Treaty Indian (registered under the *Indian Act* of Canada) and/or being a member of a First Nation or Indian band. Although single and multiple responses to the Aboriginal identity question are possible, the data in this document for each of the three Aboriginal groups are based on the population reporting a single identity of First Nations, Métis, or Inuit.
5. Inuit Nunangat stretches from Labrador to the Northwest Territories and comprises four regions—Nunatsiavut, Nunavik, Nunavut and the Inuvialuit region of the Northwest Territories.
6. See van de Sande and Menzies (2003); Castellano (2002).
7. See Statistics Canada (2008).
8. A little less than 1% of Aboriginal children aged 14 and under identified with multiple Aboriginal groups and 1.3% reported other Aboriginal identities. Other Aboriginal identities include people who did not report being First Nations (North American Indian), Métis or Inuk (Inuit) but who did report Registered or Treaty Indian status and/or membership in a First Nation or Indian band.
9. The term "family" in this document refers to the census definition of census family, and is used for simplicity throughout this report, unless otherwise specified. A census family is composed of a married or common-law couple, with or without children, or a lone-parent living with at least one child in the same dwelling. Couples can be of the opposite or same sex.
10. Among children living with both parents, 75% of Inuit children lived with two parents who also reported having an Inuit identity, which was also the case for 55% of First Nations children and 15% of Métis children.
11. See Bohnert et al. (2014).
12. In this analysis, the census family concept is used. Therefore, among children living in a lone-parent family, roughly 20% also have grandparents living in the household. The proportion was roughly 13% for non-Aboriginal children. Lone-grandparent families are excluded from this particular number and will be looked at later in the paper.
13. *Table A1* provides supplementary information about the living arrangements of First Nations children living on reserve and off reserve. *Table A2* provides similar information for Inuit children, by Inuit area of residence.
14. See Fuller-Thomson (2005).
15. See Castellano (2002); Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada (2006); Dorion (2003).

16. In the report entitled Aboriginal Peoples in Canada: First Nations People, Métis and Inuit (Statistics Canada, 2013), the number of children living in multigenerational families is lower than what is presented here. In the current study, the method used to derive the number of children living in a multigenerational household provides a more comprehensive count of the number of children living in this arrangement.
17. According to Milan et al. (2015), co-residing grandchildren were more likely to belong to a visible minority group, speak a non-official language in the home or be affiliated with a non-Christian religion. Therefore, if individuals from these groups were removed from the non-Aboriginal total, the differences could be larger.
18. This could be higher for non-Aboriginal children because immigrant children would be included in this category. Milan et al. (2015) found that, in 2011, more than 8% of the immigrant population aged 45 and over lived in a home they shared with their grandchildren, compared with less than 3% of their Canadian-born counterparts.
19. See Morency et al. (2015).
20. See Sinha and Kozlowski (2013).
21. According to Anderson and Ball (2011, p. 77), "across Canada, child and family services agencies operated by First Nations and Métis councils are innovating programs to reconnect children and families of origin and/or with their cultural communities". Also see also Shangreaux (2004); Blackstock (2010); Sinha and Kozlowski (2013).
22. See Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015).
23. This number could be underestimated. In some cases, grandparents, aunts and uncles or other family members may be fostering children; however, they may have identified them by their familial relationship (e.g., grandchild, niece, nephew) rather than as foster children on their NHS questionnaire.
24. This is the population in a private household who have been reported as foster children on the NHS questionnaire. This does not include counts for children in collective dwellings, institutions or group homes, for example, and therefore these counts may differ from those from other sources. Foster children are considered as "other relatives" in an economic family—a group of two or more persons who live in the same dwelling and are related to each other by blood, marriage, common-law relationship, adoption or foster relationship.
25. A little over 1% of Aboriginal foster children were reported to have Aboriginal identities n.i.e. (not included elsewhere) and multiple Aboriginal identities.
26. "Foster parent" refers to the reference person in the economic family and his or her spouse.
27. Foster parents with a different Aboriginal identity than the foster child may have identified with multiple Aboriginal groups (combinations of First Nations, Métis and/or Inuit). Some foster parents may have been classified as Aboriginal n.i.e., which includes people who reported having registered Indian status and/or being members of a First Nation or Indian band without reporting themselves as an Aboriginal person.
28. See Tam et al. (forthcoming).
29. See Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015).
30. See Brown et al. (2009).
31. See Statistics Canada (2012).
32. See Gough et al. (2009).

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Supplementary material

Table A1
First Nations children aged 14 and under in private households by living arrangement and area of residence, 2011

	Total First Nations children		First Nations children with registered Indian status						First Nations children without registered Indian status	
			Total		Living on reserve		Living off reserve			
	number	percent	number	percent	number	percent	number	percent	number	percent
Living arrangements										
Total population aged 14 and under in private households	258,795	100.0	195,920	10[illegible]	102,165	100.0	93,760	100.0	62,875	100.0
Children of both parents	116,370	45.0	84,450	43.1	47,550	46.5	36,890	39.3	31,925	50.8
Stepchildren	22,445	8.7	16,080	8.2	8,575	8.4	7,510	8.0	6,360	10.1
Children of lone parents	96,045	37.1	75,175	38.4	36,875	36.1	38,300	40.8	20,865	33.2
Grandchildren in skip-generation family	8,490	3.3	7,035	3.6	4,560	4.5	2,475	2.6	1,455	2.3
Foster children	11,705	4.5	9,870	5.0	2,450	2.4	7,420	7.9	1,835	2.9
Children living with other relatives	3,745	1.4	3,305	1.7	2,155	2.1	1,155	1.2	435	0.7

Source: Statistics Canada, National Household Survey, 2011.

Table A2
Inuit children aged 14 and under in private households by living arrangement and Inuit area of residence, 2011

	Inuit area of residence									
	Nunatsiavut		Nunavik		Nunavut		Inuvialuit region		Outside Inuit Nunangat	
	number	percent	number	percent	number	percent	number	percent	number	percent
Living arrangements										
Total Inuit population aged 14 and under in private households	575	100.0	3,975	100.0	9,910	100.0	925	100.0	4,775	100.0
Children of both parents	355	61.7	2,305	58.0	6,590	66.5	570	61.6	2,595	54.3
Stepchildren	55	9.6	205	5.2	530	5.3	90	9.7	405	8.5
Children of lone parents	125	21.7	1,195	30.1	2,310	23.3	220	23.8	1,350	28.3
Grandchildren in skip-generation family	15	2.6	80	2.0	240	2.4	25	2.7	120	2.5
Foster children	25	4.3	140	3.5	125	1.3	10	1.1	270	5.7
Children living with other relatives	0	0.0	50	1.3	120	1.2	10	1.1	45	0.9

Source: Statistics Canada, National Household Survey, 2011.